

Written Testimony of Gloria Mills
Submitted to the Appropriations Committee
Re: AAC Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2013 (HB 6380)
(Connecticut Department of Transportation)
February 25, 2011

Madam Co-Chairs and members of the Appropriations Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding HB 6380, AAC the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2013. I limit my comments to Governor Malloy's proposed budget for the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

For thousands of Connecticut residents who demonstrate every day that riding the bus to work and other destinations makes sense for their pocketbook, the air they breathe and the state's economy, the funds appropriated to Bus Operations, the ADA Para Transit Program and Non-ADA Dial-A-Ride Program determine the hours and days of operation of their bus service, the frequency of their service, and the availability of a seat for them. In these difficult economic times, enabling more residents to use alternative transportation options to their own automobile for more of their trips makes economic sense, especially as the cost of gasoline increases.

Unfortunately, Governor Malloy's proposed investment level in Bus Operations will not enable more residents to use the bus for some of their trips. The Governor's proposed \$3 million cap to the state matching grants to municipalities for demand responsive transportation for residents age sixty (or older) or who have a disability represents a reduction from the \$4.16 million in grants requested for FY 2011 by the towns. Not only will the reduction of matching funds cause towns to be unable to provide the same amount of service to eligible residents, but the \$3 million cap may in fact leave many more elderly "stranded at home" by reducing the apportionment to each town (CGS 13b-38bb allocates funds to each town based on the statute's apportionment formula). The town apportionment level in FY 2011 is based on an appropriation of \$ 5 million in the Bus Operations line for the state matching grant program.

Furthermore, the state matching grants to municipalities for demand responsive transportation for the elderly and people with disabilities may have helped reduce demand for ADA Para Transit Program in towns with fixed route bus service. If less town dial-a-ride service results in increased demand for rides funded by the more expensive ADA Para Transit Program, the cost to the state will increase.

Finally, Governor Malloy's budget keeps the Non-ADA Dial-A-Ride line at the FY 2006 level. The Non-ADA Dial-A-Ride budget line provides limited funds to transit districts in New Haven, Hartford, Milford, and Middletown.

As a Connecticut resident who resides in the Town of Granby, my mobility choices are a commuter express bus, a town dial-a-ride, or drive my own automobile. As gasoline prices increase, my income becomes fixed, and my health becomes challenged, I am more acutely aware of the importance of mobility choice and the need to have access to the most affordable option—fixed route bus service. Many more Connecticut residents may share my concern now or in the immediate future, but for now, as the state seeks to balance the budget, more bus service will not be on the streets of their communities.

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